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(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
24 July 2003 (24.07.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/059358 A1

(51) International Patent Classification: **A61K 31/593, A23K 1/16, A23D 7/00, 9/00, A23L 1/303**

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(21) International Application Number: **PCT/EP03/00251**

(81) Designated States (national): **AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.**

(22) International Filing Date: **14 January 2003 (14.01.2003)**

(25) Filing Language: **English**

(26) Publication Language: **English**

(84) Designated States (regional): **ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, IT, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, PT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CI, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).**

(30) Priority Data:
60/350,301 15 January 2002 (15.01.2002) US

Published:

— with international search report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.



WO 03/059358 A1

(54) Title: **25-HYDROXY VITAMIN D₃ COMPOSITIONS**

(57) Abstract: An oil composition containing 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ and an oil is provided. In addition an emulsion, a microencapsulated oil composition, and a feed premix composition each containing 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ are provided. Methods of making an oil composition, a microencapsulated oil composition, and a feed premix containing 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ are also provided.

25-Hydroxy Vitamin D₃ compositions

The present invention relates to compositions containing 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃, including oils, emulsions, microencapsulated oils, and feed premixes. The invention also relates to methods of making and using such compositions.

5 Vitamins are useful as nutritional supplements in the diet of various animals. Vitamins act as catalysts in nearly every biochemical pathway. For that reason vitamin deficiency leads to numerous diseases and physical ailments.

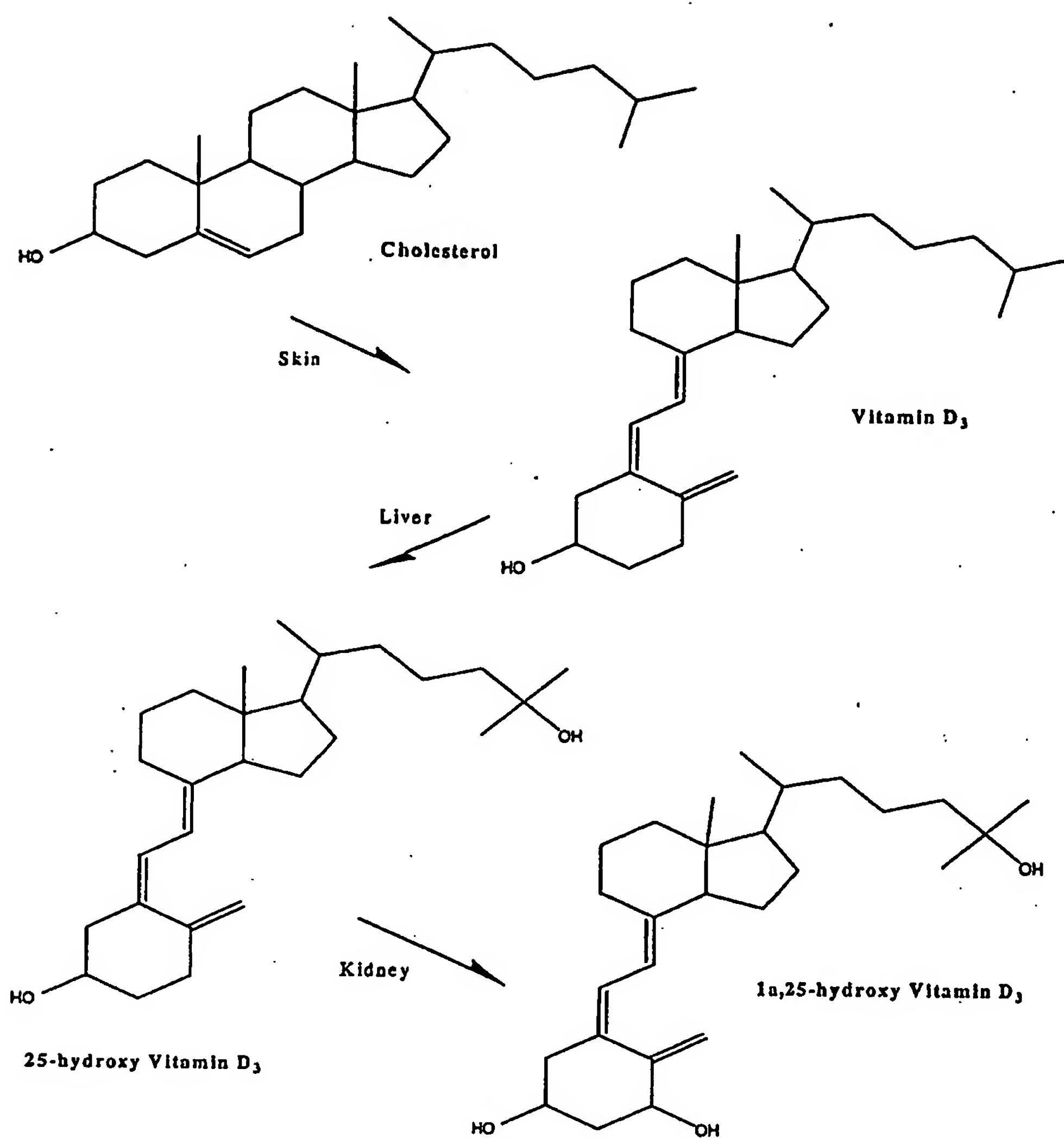
Vitamin D₃ is implicated in numerous diseases. Too much or too little Vitamin D₃ in the parathyroid can lead to hyperparathyroidism, hypoparathyroidism, pseudohypopara-

10 thyroidism, and secondary hyperparathyroidism. In the pancreas Vitamin D₃ is implicated in diabetes. In the liver, problems with Vitamin D₃ can lead to cirrhosis, and obstructive jaundice. Vitamin D₃ is intimately involved in the regulation of calcium levels and in the bone is implicated in fibrogenesis imperfecta ossium, osteitis fibrosa cystica, osteomalacia, osteoporosis, osteopenia, osteosclerosis, renal osteodystrophy, and rickets. In the
15 intestine, Vitamin D₃ plays a role in glucocorticoid antagonism, idiopathic hypercalcemia, malabsorption syndrome, and tropical sprue. Psoriasis in the skin, medullary carcinoma in the thyroid, sarcoidosis in the lung, and hypophosphatemic VDRR and chronic renal disease in the kidney are all affected by the levels of Vitamin D₃ in the body.

Vitamin D₃ is produced by the skin under normal sunlight conditions through the oxida-
20 tion of cholesterol. Vitamin D₃ is then converted by the liver into 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃. Finally, 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is converted by the kidney into 1 α ,25(OH)₂ Vitamin D₃, which is active in various biochemical pathways.

25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is a reservoir of the downstream 1 α ,25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ in the body. When the level of Vitamin D₃ is adequate, 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is stored in the
25 liver. It is released from the liver, as required, and further processed by the kidney into the active molecule.

The production of 1 α ,25(OH)₂ Vitamin D₃ is shown below.



For these reasons, it is useful to provide 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ to animals as a nutritional supplement. Formulations containing 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ are sold, e.g., under the trademark HY-D (Roche Vitamins Inc., Parsippany, New Jersey).

5. Unfortunately, 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is unstable under conventional storage conditions, resulting in a time-dependent loss of activity per unit mass. Among other things, 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is prone to oxidation, particularly during storage over extended periods of time. Such degradation can adversely affect dosing of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ when incorporated into animal feeds.
10. It would, therefore, be advantageous to provide 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ compositions with improved stability characteristics under a wide spectrum of conditions and in

combination with various nutritional additives. These and other objects of the present invention are described in greater detail below.

The present invention provides an oil composition containing an oil and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃, wherein the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount 5 between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition. These oil compositions may be advantageously incorporated into many other compositions, especially emulsions, microencapsulated oils, and feed premixes.

The oil employed in the present invention may be any edible oil or fat, preferably having a high content of lauric acid, e.g., babassu oil, coconut oil, cohune oil, murumuru tallow, 10 palm kernel oil, tucum oil. The oil may be natural, synthetic, semisynthetic, or mixtures thereof. Natural oils may be derived from any source, e.g., animal, plant, fungal, marine. Synthetic and semisynthetic oils may be produced by any convenient means.

Preferred oils are coconut oil, babassu oil, cohune oil and palm kernel oil.

25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ may be obtained from any source. For example, the production of 15 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is described in US 3,565,924, and the isolation of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is described in US 4,310,467.

The oil composition may be prepared by any convenient means. Generally, crystals of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ are dissolved in the oil by heating with agitation. Preferably, the oil is first placed in an appropriate vessel and heated to the desired temperature. Thereafter, 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is added to the oil, in an appropriate amount, while maintaining the 20 temperature of the oil or increasing it over time. The oil composition is then agitated for a time sufficient to dissolve the crystals of the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃. Prior to addition to the oil, the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ crystals may be reduced in size by any convenient means, including, milling and/or sieving, to enhance dissolving. Agitation may be accomplished by any convenient means, including stirring, vessel rotation, mixing, homogenization, recirculation, and ultrasonication.

Conveniently, the oil is heated to 80-85°C, the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is introduced into the vessel, and the temperature is maintained over two hours while stirring the oil composition.

30 Generally, 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and 50% by weight, based on the total weight of the oil composition. Preferably, the 25-

hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 10% and 40% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; more preferably, in an amount between about 12.5% and 28%; and even more preferably, in an amount between about 15% and 25%

- 5 The oil composition may optionally contain any other suitable material including, but not limited to, antioxidants, preservatives, dissolution agents, surfactants, pH adjusting agents or buffers, humectants, and mixtures thereof.

Suitable antioxidants include mixed tocopherols, tocopherols from natural or synthetic sources, ethoxyquin (EMQ) (6-ethoxy-1,2-dihydro-2,2,4-trimethyl-quinoline), butylated hydroxy toluene (BHT), butylated hydroxy anisole (BHA), natural antioxidants like rosemary extract, propyl galate, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, the antioxidant is EMQ.

Suitable preservatives include methyl paraben, propyl paraben, potassium sorbate, sodium benzoate, benzoic acid, and mixtures thereof. Suitable dissolution agents include inorganic or organic solvents, including alcohols, chlorinated hydrocarbons, and mixtures thereof.

Surfactants may be anionic, cationic or nonionic. Suitable surfactants include ascorbyl palmitate, polysorbates, polyethylene glycols, and mixtures thereof. Suitable pH adjusting agents or buffers include citric acid-sodium citrate, phosphoric acid-sodium phosphate, acetic acid-sodium acetate, and mixtures thereof. Suitable humectants include glycerol, sorbitol, polyethylene glycol, propylene glycol, and mixtures thereof.

As appears, the enhanced stability of the various compositions of the present invention is attributable to a physical separation of the labile 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ component on the one hand, and minerals, transition metals, and/or peroxides often added to animal feed premixes and animal feeds, on the other hand. This enhanced stability is of practical advantage, as shown in the comparative data in the Examples below. Preferably, therefore, the oil compositions of the invention do not contain any minerals, transition metals, or peroxides.

Once formed, the oil composition of the invention may be incorporated in various other useful compositions, some of which are discussed below. For example, emulsions may be formed, which may be converted into various encapsulated oils having superior stability properties.

The present invention also provides an emulsion comprising an aqueous composition and an oil composition, wherein the oil composition comprises 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and about 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition.

- 5 A variety of emulsions may be prepared by combining the oil compositions described above with an aqueous composition. The emulsion may be of any type. Suitable emulsions include oil-in-water emulsions, water-in-oil emulsions, anhydrous emulsions, solid emulsions, and microemulsions. The emulsions may be prepared by any convenient method.
- 10 As used herein, the terms "aqueous composition" and "aqueous phase" are used interchangeably.

Generally, the emulsion contains from about 20% to about 95% of an aqueous composition, and from about 5% to about 80% of an oil composition. Preferably, however, the emulsion contains from about 85% to about 95% of an aqueous composition, and from 15 about 5% to about 15% of an oil composition.

Conveniently, the oil composition may be dispersed as droplets in the aqueous composition. For example, the droplets may have a mean diameter of less than about 500 nm in the aqueous composition. Conveniently, the droplets have a mean diameter of between about 100 nm and about 200 nm.

- 20 Also provided is a microencapsulated oil comprising an oil composition and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition, wherein the oil composition contains 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an amount between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition. In addition, a method of making the micro-encapsulated oil is provided, comprising providing an oil composition wherein 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in an oil in an amount between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition, and encapsulating the oil composition in encapsulating agent.
- 25

In a particularly advantageous embodiment, the emulsion contains an encapsulating agent, which facilitates microencapsulating the oil composition upon further processing of 30 the emulsion, e.g., by spray drying. As used herein, the terms "encapsulating agent" and "encapsulation agent" are used interchangeably.

The encapsulating agent may be any edible substance capable of encapsulating the oil composition. Preferably, the encapsulating agent is capable of eliminating contact between the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ and the environment when the oil composition is encapsulated by the encapsulating agent. Preferably, the encapsulation agent is predominantly a colloidal material. Such materials include starches, proteins from animal sources (including gelatins), proteins from plant sources, casein, pectin, alginate, agar, maltodextrins, lignin sulfonates, cellulose derivatives, sugars, saccharides, sorbitols, gums, and mixtures thereof.

5 Suitable starches include: plant starches (e.g., CAPSUL® (National Starch & Chemical Corp., New York, New York), HI-CAP® (National Starch & Chemical Corp., New York, New York)), other modified food starches, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, the starch is CAPSUL®.

10 Suitable proteins from animal sources include: gelatins (e.g., bovine gelatins, porcine gelatins (Type A or B) with different Bloom numbers, fish gelatins), skim milk protein, caseinate, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, the protein from an animal source is a gelatin.

15 Suitable proteins from plant sources include: potato protein (e.g., ALBUREX® (Roquette Preres Societe Anonyme, Lestrem, France)), pea protein, soy protein, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, the protein from a plant source is ALBUREX® potato protein.

20 Suitable maltodextrins with a different dextrose equivalent include: maltodextrin 5, maltodextrin 10, maltodextrin 15, maltodextrin 20, maltodextrin 25, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, the maltodextrin is maltodextrin 15.

25 Suitable cellulose derivatives include: ethyl cellulose, methylethyl cellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, hydroxypropylmethyl cellulose, carboxymethylcellulose, and mixture thereof. Suitable saccharides include lactose, sucrose, or mixtures thereof. Preferably, the saccharide is sucrose. Suitable gums include: acacia, locust bean, carragean, and mixtures thereof. Preferably, the gum is gum acacia.

30 When the emulsion of the invention contains an encapsulating agent, the encapsulating agent may be dispersed in water by any suitable means to form an aqueous phase. The aqueous phase may be a solution or a mixture depending on the properties of the components selected. The selected components may be dispersed by any suitable means including: homogenizing, mixing, emulsifying, recirculating, static mixing, ultrasonication, stirring, heating, and combinations thereof. The viscosity of the resulting aqueous phase may then be adjusted, as desired, by the addition of water.

The aqueous composition of the emulsion may optionally contain any other suitable material including but not limited to, those discussed above in reference to the oil composition. Preferably, the aqueous composition may include, an encapsulating agent, a film-forming agent, a plasticizer, a preservative, an antioxidant, and mixtures thereof.

- 5 Suitable antioxidants include sodium ascorbate, ascorbic acid, citric acid, and mixtures thereof. Suitable preservatives include methyl paraben, propyl paraben, sorbic acid, potassium sorbate, sodium benzoate, and mixtures thereof.

Preferably, the aqueous phase contains a modified food starch, such as octenyl succinyl starch (CAPSUL[®]), maltodextrin, and sodium ascorbate. The selected components may be 10 dissolved in water by any suitable means, preferably stirring. The final viscosity of the resulting aqueous phase may then be adjusted to the desired viscosity, preferably about 250 to about 450 cp, more preferably about 300 to about 400 cp, even more preferably about 385 cp.

- 15 Another preferred aqueous phase contains potato protein (ALBUREX[®]), maltodextrin 20, and sodium ascorbate. The selected components are dispersed into the water, preferably by homogenization. The mixture is preferably homogenized until it is uniform and lump-free. Preferably, the homogenization is carried out at a temperature between about 50°C and about 75°C.

Preferably, the emulsion compositions of the invention should not contain any mineral, 20 transition metal, or peroxide.

The emulsion may be formed by emulsifying the oil composition and the aqueous phase by any means, including homogenization, rotor-stator shear, high pressure shear and cavitation, high speed "cowles" or shear agitation, and combinations thereof. The volume and viscosity of the emulsion may preferably be adjusted by the addition of water after emulsification. 25

Conveniently, the oil composition and aqueous composition are emulsified by homogenization.

As noted above, the emulsion may be incorporated or employed in producing other useful compositions, especially microencapsulated oils, e.g., spray dried powders.

Generally, the microencapsulated oils comprise an oil composition and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition, wherein the oil composition contains 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and about 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition.

- 5 The microencapsulated oil may be produced by any convenient means. Conveniently, the oil composition is encapsulated by drying an emulsion described above by any suitable means, including spray drying, freeze drying, fluid bed drying, tray drying, adsorption, and combinations thereof. Preferably, the microencapsulated oil is produced by spray drying an emulsion having an aqueous phase as defined above containing an encapsulation agent.
- 10 The spray drying parameters are dictated by the physical characteristics desired in the final microencapsulated oil. Such physical parameters include particle size, powder shape and flow, and water content.

Low concentrations of oil in the microencapsulated oil relative to the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ leads to enhanced protection of the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ and high recovery of the 15 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ during the encapsulation process. Conveniently, the oil is in an amount less than about 30% by weight based on the total weight of the microencapsulated oil; more conveniently, less than about 20%, more preferably, less than about 10%; and even more preferably, less than about 5%.

20 The microencapsulated oil should have good flowability and the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ should be distributed homogeneously throughout the composition. Conveniently, the microencapsulated oil is a powder.

Any other suitable additive may be added to the microencapsulated oil. One such additive may be a flow agent such as silicon dioxide, to increase the flowability of the microencapsulated oil.

- 25 The microencapsulated oil may be incorporated into or employed in producing various other useful compositions, including feed premix compositions.

The present invention also provides a feed premix composition comprising a microencapsulated oil of the invention admixed with at least one nutritional additive. Also provided is a method of making the feed premix composition, comprising providing a microencapsulated oil comprising an oil composition, wherein 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in an oil in an amount between about 5% and about 50% by weight based on the total weight of

the oil composition encapsulated in an encapsulating agent. The microencapsulated oil composition is then admixed with a nutritional additive.

As used herein the term "nutritional additive" means any substance added to animal feeds and animal feed premixes to add nutritional value to the product, to adjust the nutritional 5 value of the product, or to aid in the addition of nutritional value to the product. Suitable nutritional additives include: vitamins, pro vitamins, minerals, active phytase, amino acids, carotenoids, starches, fish meal, choline, medicinal additives, carriers, and combinations thereof.

Suitable vitamins include all vitamins and derivatives thereof (Vitamin A, Vitamin E, 10 Vitamin B₁₂, Vitamin B₃, Niacin, d-pantothenic acid, Folic Acid, Vitamin B₆, Vitamin B₁, Vitamin D₃, Vitamin C, Vitamin B₂, and combinations thereof.) Any pro vitamin or mixture of pro vitamins may be employed, such as beta-carotene. Suitable minerals and their salts include manganese, zinc, iron sulfate (monohydrate), copper oxide, cobalt sulfate Iodine, selenium, and combinations thereof.

15 Any suitable amino acid may be employed. Suitable carotenoids include: CAROPHYLL[®] Red (Roche Vitamins Inc., Parsippany, New Jersey), beta carotene, astaxanthin, and combinations thereof. Suitable starches include: corn starch, wheat starch, potato starch, tapioca starch, and combinations thereof.

Suitable medicinal additives include: pharmaceuticals, performance enhancers, antibiotics, 20 antioccidials, and mixtures thereof. Suitable carriers include: limestone, wheat middlings, corn meal, rice hulls, calcium carbonate, and combinations thereof.

Conveniently, the feed premix composition contains Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin B₁₂, Vitamin B₃, niacin, d-pantothenic acid, folic acid, Vitamin B₆, Vitamin B₁, limestone, and rice hulls.

25 Another preferred feed premix composition contains Vitamin E, Vitamin B₃, carotenoids, choline chloride, manganese oxide, zinc oxide, iron sulphate, copper oxide, cobalt sulphate, and wheat middlings. Still another preferred feed premix composition of the invention contains a phytase enzyme.

The feed premix composition may be produced by any convenient means known in the art 30 by combining the microencapsulated oil with any selected nutritional additives; including by mixing, adhesion, dispersion of the microencapsulated ingredient in an appropriate sol-

vent and spraying onto the nutritional additive, and combinations thereof. Conveniently, the feed premix composition is produced by mixing the microencapsulated oil with any selected nutritional additives.

The feed premix compositions may be added to a variety of animal food products. For 5 example, they may be added to poultry (e.g., fryers, broilers, layers, turkeys) feed, swine, canine, and feline feed.

Generally, the premix is combined with the animal food product in an amount to provide 50 ppb to 200 ppb (parts-per-billion) 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ based on the finished feed.

In accordance with the foregoing the present invention thus provides

- 10 (a) An oil composition comprising an oil, e.g. selected from the group consisting of babassu, coconut, cohune, murumyru tallow, palm kernel and tucum oil, preferably from coconut oil and palm kernel oil, and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃, wherein the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and 50%, e.g. in an amount between about 10% and 40% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition, 15 e.g. preferably in an amount between about 12.5% and 28%, more preferably in an amount between about 15% and 25% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition.
- 20 (b) An oil composition as under (a) further comprising an antioxidant, e.g. selected from the group consisting of a mixed tocopherols, tocopherols, ethoxyquin, butylated hydroxy toluene, butylated hydroxy anisole, natural antioxidants and propyl galate.
- 25 (c) An emulsion comprising an oil composition comprising an oil and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃, wherein the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and an aqueous composition, e.g. an aqueous composition comprising an encapsulating agent and water.
- 30 (d) An emulsion as under (c) wherein the oil composition is dispersed as droplets in the aqueous composition, e.g. as droplets having a mean diameter of less than about 500 nm, preferably a mean diameter between about 100 nm and about 200 nm.
- (e) A microencapsulated oil comprising an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an oil in an amount of between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition, e.g. selected from the group consisting of starches, proteins from animal sources, proteins from plant sources, casein, pectin, alginate, agar, maltodextrins,

lignin sulfonates, cellulose derivatives, sugars, saccharides, sorbitols and gums, preferably the encapsulation agent is starch.

(f) A microencapsulated oil composition as under (e) wherein the oil is present in the oil composition in an amount less than about 30% by weight based on the total weight of the

5 microencapsulated oil composition, preferably in an amount less than about 20%, more preferably less than about 10%, most preferably less than about 5% by weight based on the total weight of the microencapsulated oil composition.

(g) A microencapsulated oil composition as under (e) wherein the oil is selected from the group consisting of babassu, coconut, cohune, murumyru tallow, palm kernel and tucum oil, preferably the oil is selected from coconut oil and palm kernel oil.

10 (h) A microencapsulated oil composition as under (e) wherein the encapsulation agent is starch, and the oil is coconut oil or palm kernel oil.

(i) A feed premix composition comprising a microencapsulated oil comprising an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an oil in an amount of between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition, and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition; and at least one nutritional additive, e.g. a nutritional additive selected from the group consisting of vitamins, pro vitamins, minerals, active phytase, amino acids, carotenoids, starch, fish meal, choline, and carriers, preferably the nutritional additives are Vitamin D₃, Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin B₁₂,

15 Vitamin B₃, Niacin, calcium pantothenate, Vitamin K₃, Folic Acid, Vitamin B₆, Vitamin B₁, limestone, and rice hulls; or Vitamin E, Vitamin B₃, carotenoids, choline chloride, manganese oxide, zinc oxide, iron sulphate, copper oxide, cobalt sulphate, and wheat middlings.

(j) A feed premix composition as under (i) wherein the oil is selected from the group consisting of babassu, coconut, cohune, murumyru tallow, palm kernel, and tucum oil, preferably of coconut oil and palm kernel oil.

20 (k) A feed premix composition as under (i) wherein the encapsulating agent is selected from the group consisting of starches, proteins from animal sources, proteins from plant sources, casein, pectin, alginate, agar, maltodextrins, lignin sulfonates, cellulose derivatives, sugars, saccharides, sorbitols and gums, preferably the encapsulation agent is starch.

(l) A feed premix composition as under (i) wherein the encapsulation agent is starch, and the oil is coconut oil or palm kernel oil.

30 (m) A method of making a microencapsulated oil comprising providing an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an oil in an amount between about

5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and encapsulating the oil composition in an encapsulation agent, e.g. selected from the group consisting of starches, proteins from animal sources (including gelatins), proteins from plant sources, casein, pectin, alginate, agar, maltodextrins, lignin sulfonates, cellulose derivatives, sugars, 5 saccharides, sorbitols and gums, preferably the encapsulating agent is starch.

(n) A method of making a microencapsulated oil as under (m) wherein the oil is present in the oil composition in an amount less than about 30%, preferably less than about 20%, more preferably less than about 10%, most preferably less than about 5% by weight based on the total weight of the microencapsulated oil composition.

10 (o) A method of making a microencapsulated oil as under (m) wherein the encapsulating agent is starch, and the oil is coconut oil or palm kernel oil.

(p) A method of making a microencapsulated oil as under (m) further comprising combining the oil composition and the aqueous composition to form an emulsion; and drying the emulsion to form the microencapsulated oil, e.g. drying by spray drying.

15 (q) A method of making a microencapsulated oil as under (o) wherein the droplets have a mean diameter of less than about 500 nm, preferably a mean diameter between about 100 nm and about 200 nm.

(r) A method of making a feed premix comprising providing a microencapsulated oil composition comprising an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in 20 an oil in an amount of between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition; and admixing the microencapsulated oil composition with at least one nutritional additive, e.g. a nutritional additive selected from the group consisting of vitamins, pro vitamins, minerals, active phytase, amino acids, carotenoids, starches, fish meal, choline, medicinal 25 additives and carriers.

(s) A method of making a feed premix as under (r) wherein the oil is selected from the group consisting of babassu, coconut, cohune, murumyru tallow, palm kernel and tucum oil, preferably of coconut oil and palm kernel oil.

(t) A method of making a feed premix as under (r) wherein the encapsulating agent is 30 selected from the group consisting of starches, proteins from animal sources (including gelatins), proteins from plant sources, casein, pectin, alginate, agar, maltodextrins, lignin sulfonates, cellulose derivatives, sugars, saccharides, sorbitols and gums, preferably the encapsulation agent is starch.

(u) A method of making a feed premix as under (r) wherein the encapsulation agent is 35 starch, and the oil is coconut oil or palm kernel oil.

The following examples are provided to further illustrate the compositions and methods of the present invention. These examples are illustrative only and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention in any way.

Example 1: Oil Compositions

5 Oil compositions of the present invention are prepared by dissolving 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ in an oil with heating and/or agitation, in the following proportions.

Table 1. Oil compositions.

25-OH-Vit D ₃ [g]	Oil	Oil [g]	25-OH-Vit D ₃ [% wt]
5	Coconut	95	5
5	Palm Kernel	95	5
10	Coconut	90	10
10	Palm Kernel	90	10
15	Coconut	85	15
15	Palm Kernel	85	15
20	Coconut	80	20
20	Palm Kernel	80	20
25	Coconut	75	25
25	Palm Kernel	75	25
30	Coconut	70	30
30	Palm Kernel	70	30
35	Coconut	65	35
35	Palm Kernel	65	35
40	Coconut	60	40
40	Palm Kernel	60	40
45	Coconut	55	45
45	Palm Kernel	55	45
50	Coconut	50	50
50	Palm Kernel	50	50

25-OH-Vit D₃: 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃

Example 2: Oil Compositions

The oil compositions of the present invention are prepared by dissolving 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ and an antioxidant in an oil with heating and/or agitation, in the following proportions.

Table 2. Oil compositions containing an antioxidant.

25-OH-Vit D ₃ [g]	Oil	Oil [g]	Antioxidant	Antioxidant [g]	25-OH-Vit D ₃ [% wt]
5	coconut	85	EMQ	10	5
5	coconut	75	BHT	20	5
5	palm kernel	85	EMQ	10	5
5	palm kernel	75	BHT	20	5
15	coconut	75	EMQ	10	15
15	coconut	65	BHT	20	15
15	palm kernel	75	EMQ	10	15
15	palm kernel	65	BHT	20	15
15	coconut	60	EMQ	10	30
30	coconut	50	BHT	20	30
30	palm kernel	60	EMQ	10	30
30	palm kernel	50	BHT	20	30
40	coconut	50	EMQ	10	40
40	coconut	40	BHT	20	40
40	palm kernel	50	EMQ	10	40
40	palm kernel	40	BHT	20	40
50	coconut	40	EMQ	10	50
50	coconut	30	BHT	20	50
50	palm kernel	40	EMQ	10	50
50	palm kernel	30	BHT	20	50

5 25-OH-Vit D₃: 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃

Example 3: Emulsion

An emulsion according to the present invention was prepared by dispersing an oil composition according to the present invention (e.g., those of Examples 1 and 2) in an aqueous composition.

The oil composition contained: 7.2 kg of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃; 27.6 kg coconut oil; and 19.88 kg EMQ. The oil composition was produced by mixing the coconut oil, EMQ, and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ and heating to approximately 85°C. Stirring was continued for 90 minutes at a constant temperature. At this time, all of the crystals of 25-hydroxy Vitamin 5 D₃ had gone into solution, as determined by viewing the solution under a microscope.

The aqueous composition contained: 376.35 kg of CAPSUL[®]; 78.09 kg of maltodextrin 15; 12.81 kg of sodium ascorbate; and 437.64 kg of water. To prepare the aqueous phase the ingredients were combined. With mixing and heating the dry ingredients readily dissolved in the water. The viscosity of this solution was about 385 cps.

10 The oil composition was added to the aqueous composition and homogenized in a homogenizer for 30 minutes. During homogenization an emulsion was formed wherein the droplets of the oil composition have a diameter of approximately 150 nm.

Example 4: Microencapsulated Oil Composition

15 A microencapsulated oil composition of the present invention was prepared by spray drying the emulsion of Example 3 using the following parameters:

	Inlet Temperature	135°C
	Outlet Temperature	102°C
	Microclone Inlet	4.1
	Fan Inlet	14.6
20	Silica Feeder	Set to provide about 1% Silica in dry product
	Atomizer RPM	17000 part A
		15000 part B
	Pump Speed	17 part A
		21 part B
25	Product Moisture	1.9 to 2.25%

The microencapsulated oil was a tan powder having the following characteristics:

	Loose Bulk Density	~0.42 g/ml
	Tapped Bulk Density	~0.5 g/ml
	Dust	~ 169 mg/25g
30	Angle of Repose	~ 49°
	Agway Flow	None
	Loss on Drying	~2.6 %

In addition, the microencapsulated oil composition showed a high degree of homogeneity as measured by UV absorptivity of the powder.

Example 5: Stability

Two batches of a microencapsulated oil composition of the present invention [Invention 5 001 (or Invention 1 or Batch 001) and Invention 002 (or Invention 2 or Batch 002)] were produced as set forth below. The stability of these batches was compared to a prior art commercial product in the form of a wax beadlet (Prior Art). The two batches and the commercial product were all stored at either 11°C or 25°C for up to 4 months.

The two batches tested contained approximately 1.25 %wt of 25 hydroxy Vitamin D₃ prepared according to Examples 3 and 4.

The following data demonstrate that the microencapsulated oils of the present invention exhibited greatly increased stability over the commercial product. Additionally, the micro-encapsulated oils of the present invention showed a slowdown in the degradation kinetic, indicating that the rate of degradation of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ greatly decreases after an 15 initial period of storage.

Batch 001 displays higher initial values for 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ content than Batch 002.

Storage at 11°C

Figure 1 shows the % Vitamin D₃ retention of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ (% active ingredient by weight of total composition) in microencapsulated oils according to the present invention as compared to a prior art formulation at various storage times at 11°C. The compositions of the present invention displayed improved stability compared to the commercial product, at all time points.

Figure 2 shows the percent retention of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ in microencapsulated oils according to the present invention as compared to a prior art formulation at various 25 storage times at 11°C. Figure 2 shows a plateau in the % 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ retention and demonstrates a slowdown of the degradation kinetic in the compositions of the present invention.

Storage at 25°C

Figure 3 shows the % Vitamin D₃ retention of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ (% active ingredient by weight of total composition) in microencapsulated oils according to the present invention as compared to a prior art formulation at various storage times at 25°C. The composi-

tions of the present invention displayed improved stability compared to the commercial product, at all time points.

Figure 4 shows the percent retention of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ in microencapsulated oils according to the present invention as compared to a prior art formulation at various storage times at 25°C. Figure 4 shows a plateau in the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ % retention at 25°C, and demonstrates a slowdown of the degradation kinetic in the compositions of the present invention.

Storage at 37°C

At this temperature, the prior art beadlets began to degrade and form a solid block that was no longer a powder. For this reason, the prior art beadlet could not be dissolved in the solvent as usual, and no reliable retention data could be obtained. The compositions of the present invention suffered from no such degradation, and retained good flowability and bulk density at this elevated storage temperature at all time points.

Figure 5 shows the linear regression of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ retention data for microencapsulated oils according to the present invention as compared to a prior art formulation at various storage times at various temperatures. The regression demonstrates that the compositions of the present invention have a greatly improved stability over the commercial product at both temperatures and at all storage times. In addition, the slope of the regression curves clearly shows that the rate of degradation for the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ in the microencapsulated oil compositions of the present invention is much less than that of the prior art beadlet at all storage times and temperatures. Accordingly, even after a short storage time the compositions of the present invention will retain significantly more 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ as compared to the prior art beadlet.

Example 6: Premix Composition

A basic premix for use in animal feed was prepared having the following components in the following proportions by percent weight based on the total weight of the premix.

Table 3. Premix composition

COMPONENT	% WEIGHT IN PREMIX
25-hydroxy Vitamin D ₃ , 1.25%	0.64
Vitamin A	6.40
Vitamin E	16.00

Vitamin B ₁₂	6.40
Vitamin B ₃	2.00
Niacin	8.00
Calcium Pantothenate	4.00
Vitamin K ₃	0.94
Folic Acid	0.90
Vitamin B ₆	0.96
Vitamin B ₁	0.62
Limestone	29.00
Rice Hulls	24.14

Example 7: Premix Stability

Three premixes, COMPLETE premix, VITAMIN premix and BASIC premix, for use in animal feed were prepared having the following components in the following proportions
 5 by percent weight based on the total weight of the premix.

Table 4. Composition of premixes.

COMPONENT	COMPLETE	VITAMIN	BASIC
25-hydroxy Vitamin D ₃ , 1.25%	0.50	1.00	1.57
Vitamin D ₃		0.64	
Vitamin A		6.40	
Vitamin E	0.40	16.00	
Vitamin B ₁₂		6.40	
Vitamin B ₃	0.05	2.00	
Niacin		8.00	
Calcium Pantothenate		4.00	
Vitamin K ₃		0.94	
Folic Acid		0.90	
Vitamin B ₆		0.96	
Vitamin B ₁		0.62	
Carotenoids	0.20		
Choline Chloride, 50%	1.50		
Manganese Oxide	3.00		

Zinc Oxide	0.60		
Iron Sulphate (monohydrrous)	1.00		
Copper Oxide	0.10		
Cobalt Sulphate	0.01		
Oil			1.00
Limestone		28.00	19.93
Rice Hulls		24.14	77.50
Wheat Middlings	78.99		

Each of these premix compositions was prepared using a microencapsulated oil of the present invention or a prior art beadlet containing 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃. In addition, a control formulation was prepared, in which Vitamin D₃ was substituted for the 25-

5 hydroxy Vitamin D₃. Each of the premixes was stored at 25°C and 35°C, for a length of time up to 3 months. The percent retention of the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ was determined at each time and temperature.

Table 5. Stability of Vitamin D₃ and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ formulations in the BASIC premix.

	retention [%]								
	invention			prior art			vitamin D ₃		
	B	V	C	B	V	C	B	V	C
1 month/25°C	94	98	109	98.4	94.5	80.3	88.4	106.1	101.7
1 month/35°C	85	94	82	82.5	94.9	26.9	95.1	106.3	81.7
2 months/25°C	115	98	91	95.4	88.5	33.8	90.7	102.4	85.8
2 months/35°C	75	77	52	75.2	70	17.7	97.9	91.2	71.1
3 months/25°C	84	83	82	90.6	93.4	19.5	95.7	106.2	81.1
3 months/35°C	70	78	53	67.0	77.7	7.4	97.9	104.7	70.0

10 B: premix BASIC; V: premix VITAMIN; C: premix COMPLETE

As the results show, in the BASIC and VITAMIN Premixes the stability of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ was less than that of Vitamin D₃. However, the stability the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ was nearly identical for the prior art formulation as compared to the formulations in accordance with the present invention.

The results are dramatically different when the COMPLETE Premix is considered, however. The stability of the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ in the prior art formulation dropped significantly as compared to the inventive formulations. As discussed above, this decrease in stability may be attributed to the oxidation of the Vitamin D₃ or 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃

5 by minerals, transition metals, or peroxides found in the premix. For example, at 3 months storage, the prior art formulation retained less than 20% of the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃, whereas the formulation in accordance with the present invention retained better than 50% of the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ (over 80% at a storage temperature of 25°C).

10 The formulation of the present invention thus increased 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ retention over a wide range of temperatures and times of storage, even in premixes containing components which promote degradation of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃.

Example 8: Feeds

An animal feed composition was produced by combining the feed premix compositions of

15 the present invention with an animal feed. A poultry feed was produced by mixing the premix of Example 6 with a base poultry feed having the following ingredients:

Table 6. Composition poultry base feed ingredients.

INGREDIENT	AMOUNT (% WT)
Corn	50.55
Soybean Meal	40.05
Soybean Oil	5.00
Dicalcium Phosphate	1.90
Limestone	1.40
Salt	0.40
D ₃ -free Vitamin Mix	0.20
Mineral Mix	0.15
DL-Met	0.20
Choline 60	0.10
Bacitracin	0.025
α-Tocopherol	0.002
Ethoxyquin	0.0125

The premix and base feed were mixed until substantial homogeneity was produced.

The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention and all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of
5 the following claims.

WE CLAIM:

1. An oil composition comprising an oil and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ wherein the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition.
- 5 2. An oil composition according to claim 1 further comprising an antioxidant.
3. An emulsion comprising an oil composition comprising an oil and 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃, wherein the 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ is dissolved in the oil in an amount between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and an aqueous composition.
- 10 4. An emulsion according to claim 3, wherein the oil composition is dispersed as droplets in the aqueous composition.
5. A microencapsulated oil comprising an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an oil in an amount of between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and an encapsulation agent encapsulating 15 the oil composition.
6. A microencapsulated oil composition according to claim 5 wherein the encapsulation agent is starch, and the oil is coconut oil or palm kernel oil.
7. A feed premix composition comprising a microencapsulated oil comprising an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an oil in an amount of between 20 about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition, and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition; and at least one nutritional additive.
8. A feed premix composition according to claim 7 wherein the encapsulation agent is starch, and the oil is coconut oil or palm kernel oil.
9. A feed premix composition according to claim 7 wherein the nutritional additives are 25 Vitamin D₃, Vitamin A, Vitamin E, Vitamin B₁₂, Vitamin B₃, Niacin, calcium pantothenate, Vitamin K₃, Folic Acid, Vitamin B₆, Vitamin B₁, limestone, and rice hulls, or Vitamin E, Vitamin B₃, carotenoids, choline chloride, manganese oxide, zinc oxide, iron sulphate, copper oxide, cobalt sulphate, and wheat middlings.

10. A method of making a feed premix comprising providing a microencapsulated oil composition comprising an oil composition comprising 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃ dissolved in an oil in an amount of between about 5% and 50% by weight based on the total weight of the oil composition; and an encapsulation agent encapsulating the oil composition; and

5 admixing the microencapsulated oil composition with at least one nutritional additive.

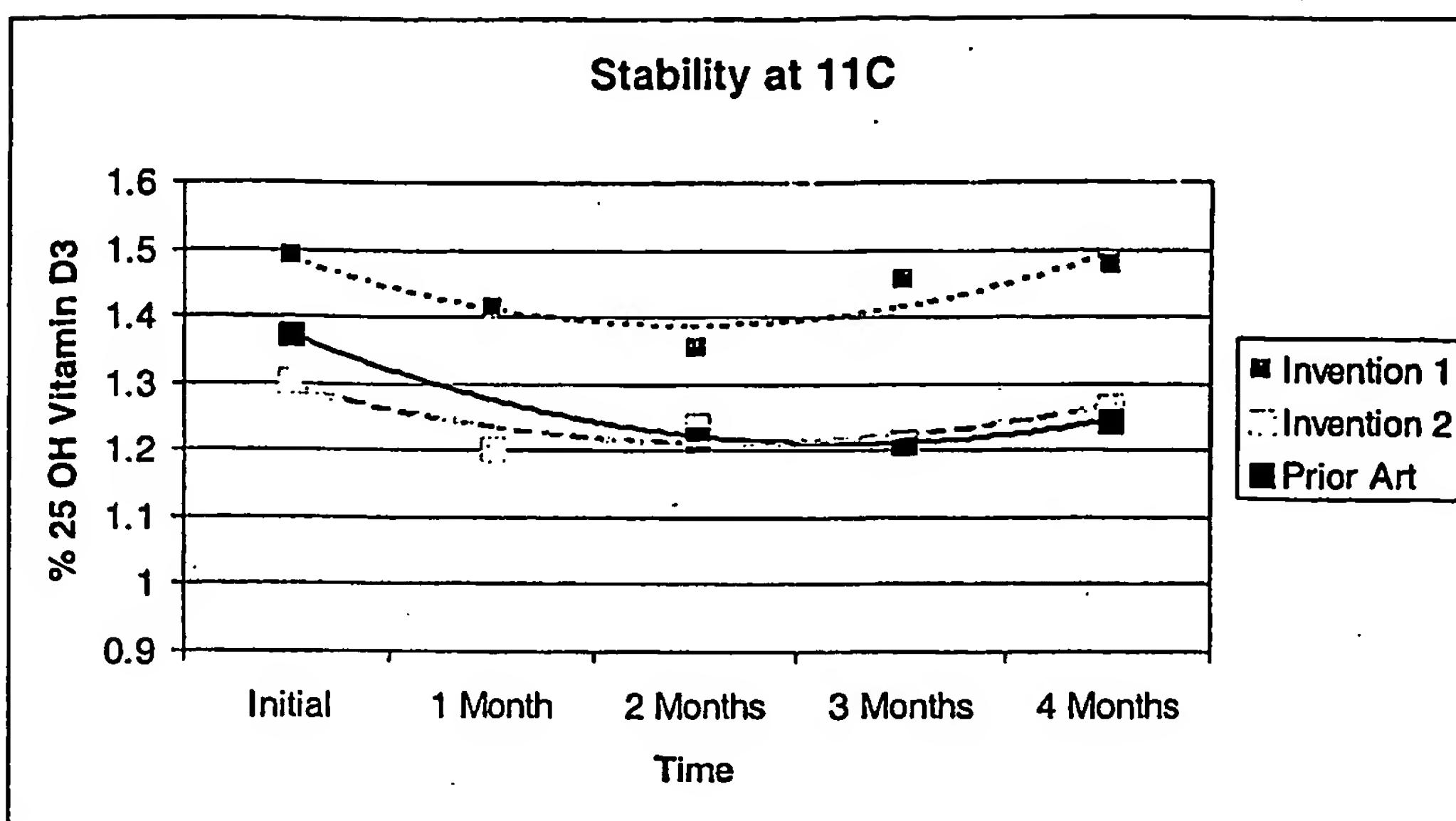


Figure 1. Stability at 11°C - % active ingredient by weight.

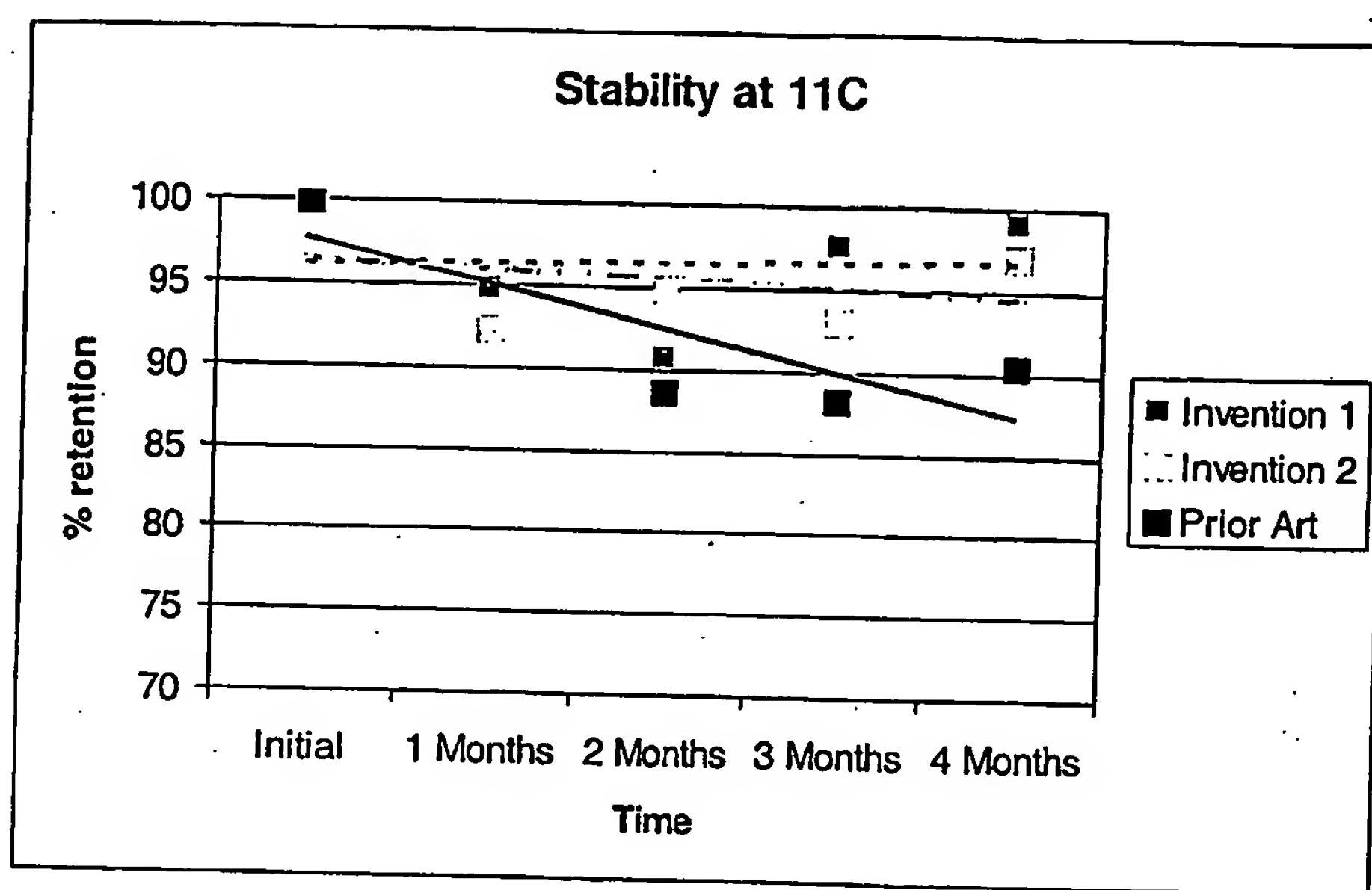


Figure 2. Stability at 11°C - % retention of the active ingredient.

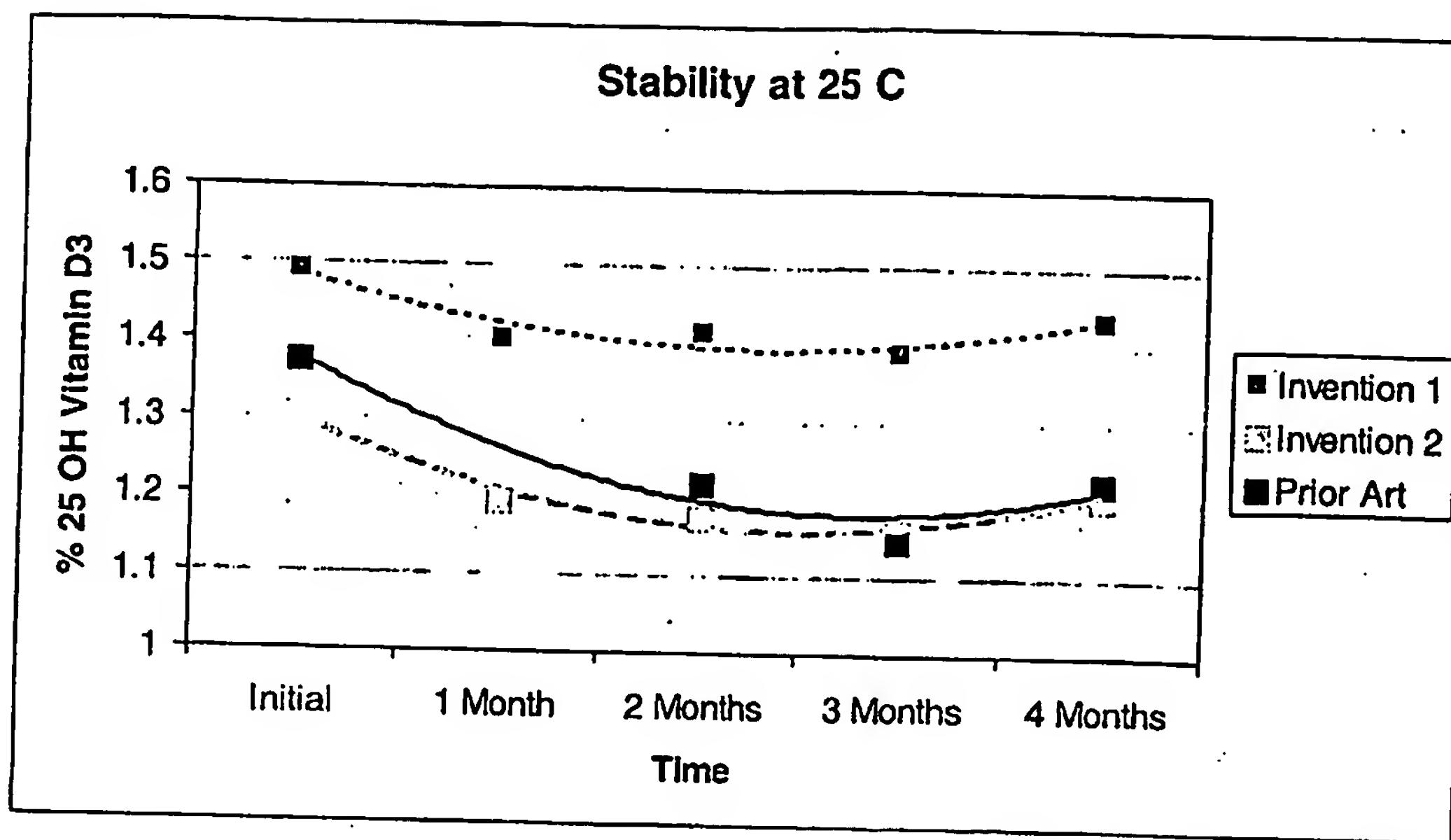


Figure 3. Stability at 25°C - % active ingredient by weight.

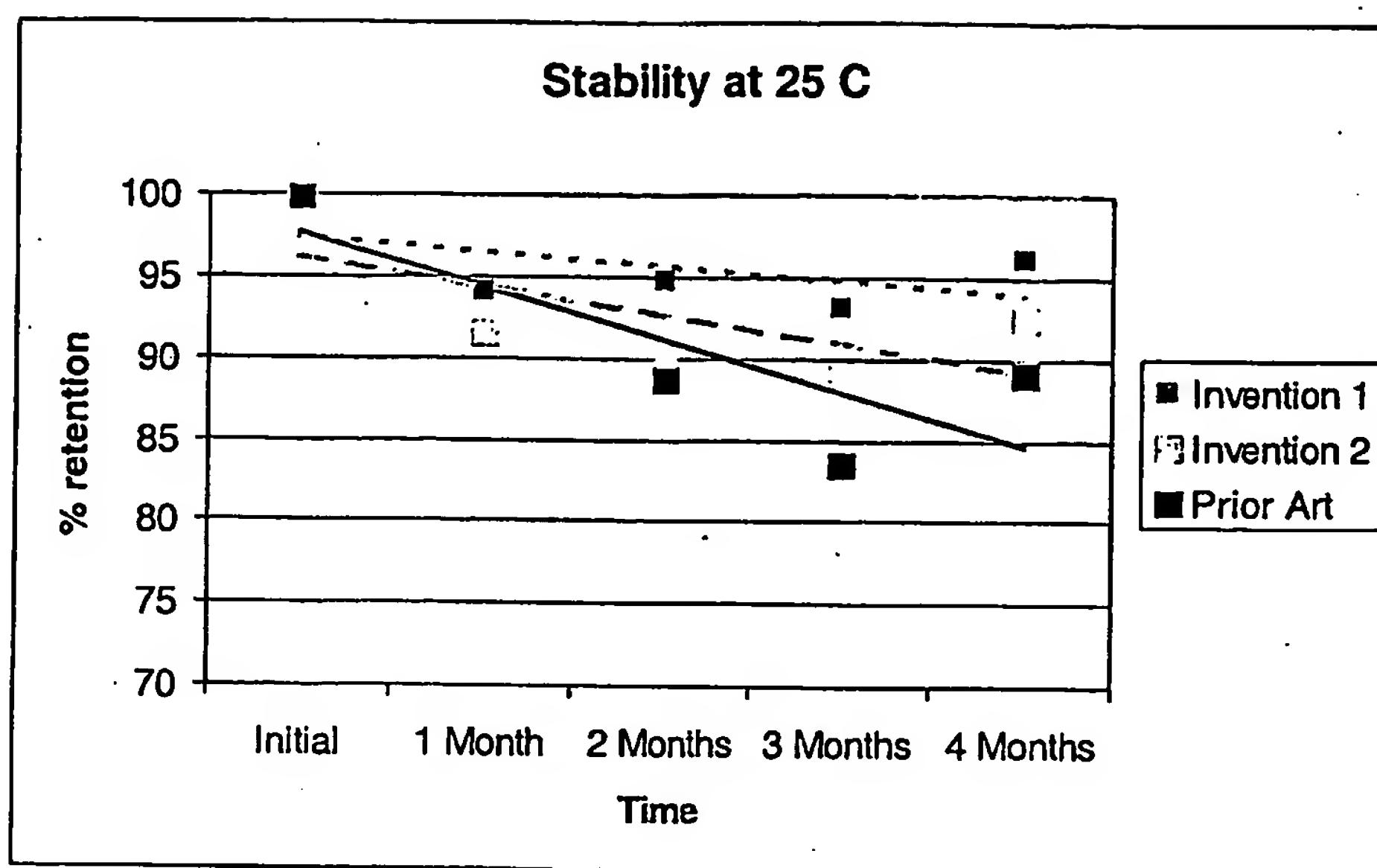


Figure 4. Stability at 25°C - % retention of the active ingredient.

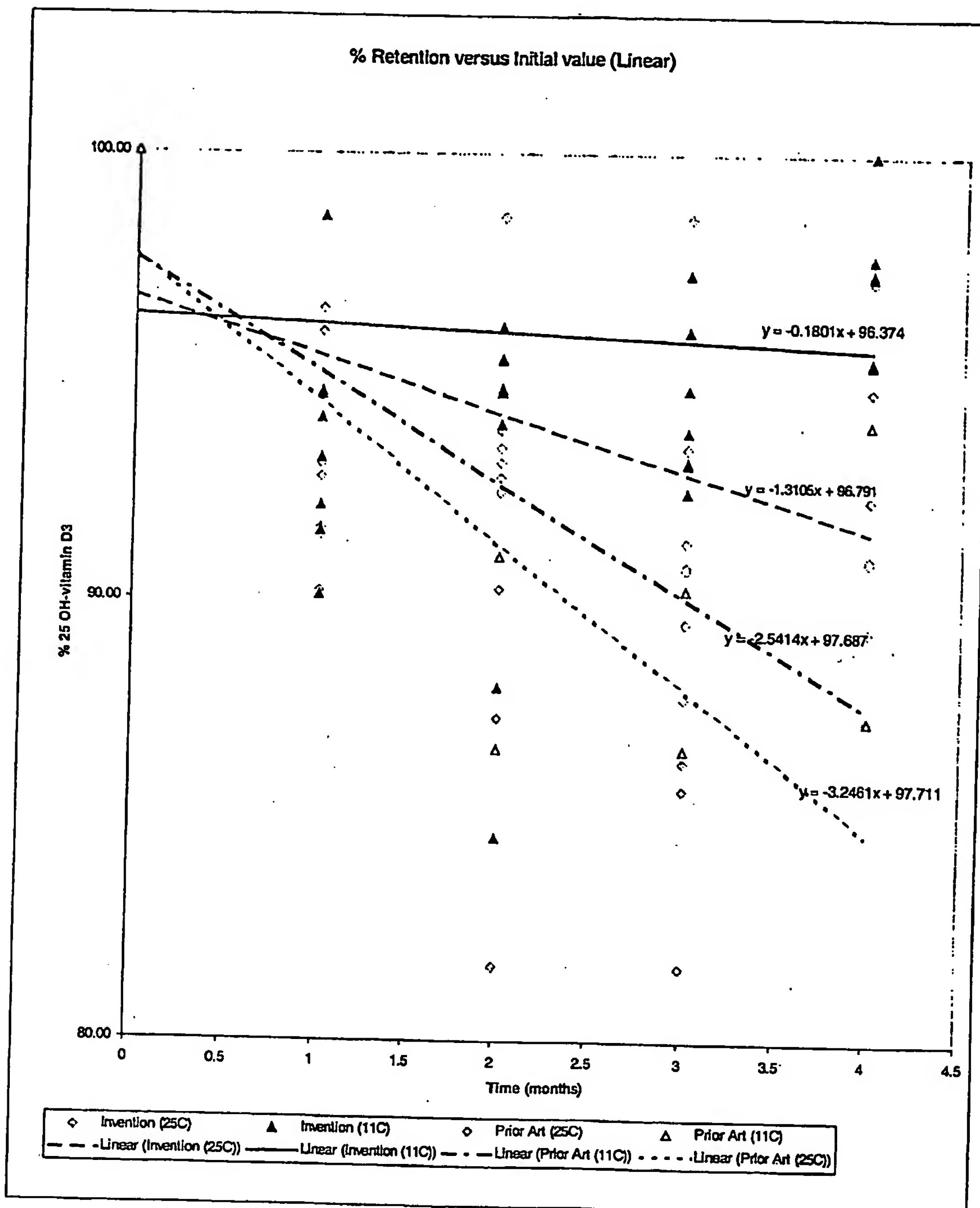


Figure 5. Linear regression of percent retention of 25-hydroxy Vitamin D₃.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/EP 03/00251

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 A61K31/593 A23K1/16 A23D7/00 A23D9/007 A23L1/303

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 A61K A23K A23D A23L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ, FSTA, BIOSIS, COMPENDEX

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 695 794 A (STARK LEONARD ET AL) 9 December 1997 (1997-12-09) column 4, paragraph 8 -column 5, paragraph 2	1,2,5-10
X	US 6 248 374 B1 (MURRAY RALPH I ET AL) 19 June 2001 (2001-06-19) column 4, paragraphs 2-4	1,2,5-10
X	EP 0 711 558 A (UNILEVER PLC ;UNILEVER NV (NL)) 15 May 1996 (1996-05-15) page 10, paragraphs 3-6 page 12, line 37-39 page 13, paragraph 2 claim 1	1-6

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Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the International search report
11 April 2003	06/05/2003
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 476 661 A (PILLAI SREEKUMAR ET AL) 19 December 1995 (1995-12-19) column 12, paragraph 4 column 14, paragraph 9 column 15, paragraph 8 claim 1 -----	1-6

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 03/00251

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US 6248374	B1 19-06-2001	NONE		
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